

Queens College Department of English

Graduate Courses for the Fall 2009 Semester

You can contact the Director of Graduate Studies in English, Professor John Weir at jweirdo@yahoo.com or go to the office hours of any member of the graduate committee (list available in English department).

Students admitted in September 2004 and later must use the new requirements for the M.A. and the M.S. in Education/English. Students admitted earlier may use either the old or the new requirements. To make sure you are taking the right sequence of courses, be sure to consult the department website at <http://qcpages.qc.edu/english/degreeprograms/ma>

636: History of Literary Criticism

E6M2A	3184	M	6:30-8:20	HH 09	Egan
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This course will survey the history of literary criticism and theory beginning with the emergence of formalism in the early twentieth century. We'll also focus on how marxism, feminism, critical race theory, and psychoanalysis impacted literary studies. We'll end by examining contemporary criticism as we discuss where literary criticism is today.

636: History of Literary Criticism

E6T2A	3185	T	6:30-8:20	KY 326	Lew
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681: Lit and Technology

E6T2B	0456	T	6:30-8:20	HH 12	Buell
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In this course, we will examine some of the cultural and social significances of a variety of different human technologies by looking closely at how these technologies have been represented in literature from the 18th century to the present. We will do some background reading on technology and its problems and possibilities, but technical knowledge is neither a requirement, nor a focus of our course. Our main focus will be on literature and film—for the most part literature and film that has had deep appeal to literary scholars and popular readers alike. Texts will include “high” literature and science fiction page-turners.

We will discuss how literature turns concern with different technologies into often exciting and thought-provoking narratives, in the process meditating on technology's varied cultural significances. We will read and view texts on both modern technologies, such as iron and steel making and Fordist mass manufacturing, and postmodern technologies, such as computer technology, biotechnology, and robotics. Accordingly, the course will provide students with a window on many of the significant differences between not only technological, but also social and literary periods, specifically the romantic, modern, and postmodern eras.

Readings will include texts like Mary Shelley's, *Frankenstein* and poetry by T.S. Eliot and Allen Ginsberg; movies like Chaplin's *Modern Times* and Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner*; and science fiction from 1984 to cyberpunk science fiction like Philip Dick's *Ubik* and William Gibson's *Neuromancer*.

681: Infinite Possibilities of Flying: Women Writers of the African Diaspora

This course explores the ways in which women writers of the African Diaspora embark on a literary journey grounded in memory and history, where they are forced, in Toni Morrison's words, to confront "proceedings too terrible to relate." We will examine their struggle for voice and their creation of landscapes of survival and recovery even as they engage issues of race, gender and sexuality. We will look at how, in these imaginary landscapes, the writers refashion self and community. We will consider approaches to reading and writing about literature and discover the transformative power of critical fiction. Among the writers we will study are: Toni Morrison, Lorna Goodison, Patricia Powell, Zora Neale Hurston, Mariama Bâ, Ama Ata Aidoo, Jean Rhys and Nicholasa Mohr.

681: Special Studies

E6T2A	0602	T	6:30-8:20	RZ 708	Green
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701: Seminar in Graduate Methodology

E6R2A	3180	Th	6:30-8:20	KY 326	Marotta
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This course will investigate the ways in which one researches and writes a major paper or thesis. We will examine various research materials, books, articles and websites from the point of view of their reliability and utility. In addition, we will work with various critical approaches to determine just how they may be applied to a text in a useful manner. Part of what we will be attempting to clarify is just how to do research, how to evaluate secondary and primary materials and then how to bring this together in a written piece. We will also use a particular text as our focal point. Several short pieces and one full-length research paper will be required.

702: Graduate Methodology for Education Students

E6W2A	3187	W	6:30-8:20	KY 326	Nysenholz
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703: Composition Theory and Literacy Studies

E6M2A	0619	M	6:30-8:20	KY 283	Peritz
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This course takes up the theory and practice of teaching writing within the context of contemporary literacy studies. We will consider the following issues: the literacy myth and its relation to schooling; what constitutes school writing and academic discourse; how teachers structure writing assignments and respond to students' work; the place of voice, style, and grammar in the writing classroom; the relation of e-technology and literacy; and future directions for English studies. Readings are drawn from recent books and journals devoted to the new literacy studies and to composition research and theory. Course participants are expected to participate consistently and thoughtfully in class activities and discussions; to respond on a regular basis to the assigned reading; and to write two (7-10 page) papers. This course is required of M.S. Ed. students and may be taken as an elective by English MA and MFA students.

719: Medieval Lit

E6M2A	0599	M	6:30-8:20	RZ 304	Sargent
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723: Jane Austen and Romantic Culture

Although Jane Austen (1775-1817) lived and wrote during the Romantic period, her novels have too often been read and interpreted as formal and moral texts that owe little or nothing to the social, political, and ethical issues so key to Romantic culture. In this course, we will consider all six of Austen's completed and published novels in relation to the historical context of their production, a context that extends from the revolutionary 1790s when Austen began her fiction-writing to the post-Napoleonic moment when, right before her untimely death, she finished *Persuasion*. Besides taking up such historical issues as sensibility, taste, domesticity, imperialism, community, novelism, and romance, we will examine how Austen's revisions turned fiction of the 1790s into the artful Regency novels we know and love: *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814), *Emma* (1815), *Northanger Abbey* (1818), and *Persuasion* (1818). Students will be expected to serve as discussion leaders; to undertake and report on some research; and to write a 10-12 page interpretive essay.

724: Studies in Victorian Literature

E6W2A 0457 W 6:30-8:20 KP 708 Schaffer

This course introduces students to the different understandings of the body in nineteenth-century British literature and culture. We will look at disabled bodies and the cultural understanding of disability as a higher state, sanctified by suffering; we will explore how Victorian feminine roles encouraged eating disorders and fetishized the malnourished body; and we will look at the type of male body that became popular under the rubric of 'muscular Christianity.' But we will also explore how these kinds of bodies get problematized at the turn of the century, by strong New Woman athletic female bodies, and by deliberately feminized, languid, aesthetic male bodies. We will look at Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, where the heroines have impoverished, diminutive bodies that they cannot bring themselves to feed or dress well. In contrast we will read Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* and Yonge's *Clever Woman of the Family*, with their strong, large, energetic, powerful heroines, and discuss why those athletic bodies seem worrisome, and why these heroines have to undergo extreme trials to subdue their physical selves. In these novels, disabled characters act as guides or ideals to which healthier characters have to emulate. This course will use websites to look at images of actual Victorian dress, especially the controversial corset and the crinoline (metal hoops worn under the skirt), discussing how those items shaped the understanding of the female body. Male bodies, too, underwent real changes in the nineteenth century. Darwinism and "muscular Christianity" began a vogue for athletic, outdoorsy, natural bodies, but Oscar Wilde and the late-Victorian aesthetes challenged this idea by introducing the notion of a deliberately feminized, languid, pleasurable male body. Reading Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* shows an example of such a transitional male character, as well as offering an interesting critique of a female body. This course will focus on the various ways the ideal body was imagined in nineteenth-century Britain, particularly through disability, self-denial, and cross-gender performance, using art, journalism, literary and art-historical criticism, disability studies, canonical texts and popular fiction. Presentation, blog, and research paper.

727: Am Lit 1820-1920: The Life and Work of Herman Melville

E6R2A 0454 Th 6:30-8:20 KP 708 Weidman

We will read the fiction, non-fiction prose and poetry of this remarkable writer, who lived and worked in New York for a significant part of his life. Literary texts will be supplemented by critical and biographical studies, and will include the novels *Typee*, *Omoo*, *Redburn*, *Moby Dick*; a selection of short stories, and the famous Civil War poems.

727: The American Novel to 1918

E4W2A 4192 W 4:30-6:20 Roberts

We will consider the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American novel as an arena in which different concepts of national community and individual sovereignty enter into conversation, compete, and revise one another. To do so, we'll ask where the American novel came from, what makes it distinctly "American," and how it imagines solutions to problems posed by diaspora, slavery, territorial expansion, revolution, immigration and cultural diversity, and the emotional life of the individual. Authors may include Susanna Rowson, Charles Brockden Brown, Royall Tyler, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Robert Montgomery Bird, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Leonora Sansay, and William Wells Brown.

729: Modern Lit

E6M2A 0464 M 6:30-8:20 KY 425 English

We will consider modern American (i.e., United States) poetry written in English from the beginning to the middle of the previous century (i.e. the 20th)—that is, from the period generally imagined as literary, cultural, artistic “modernism.” Our attention will be primarily focused on poems, framed by a few poets’ essayistic articulations—often in prose--of their poetic projects and by secondary sources about particular poets, modernist poetics, and modernism/modernity. The poets we will read are Robert Frost, Amy Lowell, James Weldon Johnson, Gertrude Stein, Ezra Pound, Wallace Stevens, William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore, T.S. Eliot, Mina Loy, Robinson Jeffers, Claude McKay and Edna St. Vincent Millay. While our focus will be mostly on poems and the poetic experience(s) that they make available, secondary texts will allow us to explore together the critical vocabulary that we and others use, and the story (the history, the literary history) that poets, critics and readers invent, tell, and sometimes merely assume/believe. Some framing questions are: What does it mean to name something “modern”? When does this name get used and by whom? How do poets articulate themselves as “modern” either explicitly or implicitly? When and where and how do poets write “modern” and write “American” (i.e., United States)? What claims are being made on “America” or “American”? When and where and how do poets write “modern American literature”? As we allow ourselves to consider such larger issues, we will consistently return to particular instances of poetic language and form in early 20th century poetry in English by poets who are, in varied ways, both modern and American.

751: Workshop in Fiction

E6W2A 2831 W 6:30-8:20 KY 283 Lieu

In this class, we will consider the construction of narrative from a variety of perspectives. In addition to our focus on the elements of fiction craft—character, point of view, plot, structure, setting, aspects of style—we will discuss what it means to experiment with fiction and fictional practices.

Class time will be spent primarily on workshop: the central focus will be on the writing process of its members. Readings by a range of contemporary and modern writers will be drawn from a course packet and additional short books. The craft discussions initiated from these texts will extend into the collective discussion of student work. Students will regularly submit to the workshop, and be expected to draft and revise in modes that may include but not be limited to the short story, novella, and novel.

Open only to students in the MFA Program

753: Poetry Workshop

E6W2A 0587 W 6:30-8:20 RA 208 Sederat

This workshop will revive the tradition of imitation in the practice of writing poetry. Long before MFA programs, poets learned from copying the masters, even as they attempted to subvert what Harold Bloom calls "the anxiety of influence." As students continue to write and submit original poetry for critiquing throughout the term, they will consistently confront the burden of an exceptional past. Paradoxically, strategies developed to achieve an original voice involve the surrendering of poetic ego. Because "writer's block," taken literally, means that the writer gets in his/her own way, students will thrust themselves into process by producing an inordinate amount of low stakes first drafts. Following the classical masters of Persian, Arabic, and Hebrew, students will also write to each other as they produce variations on the same structure and theme.

755: Workshop in Drama

E6R2A 0579 Th 6:30-8:20 RA 208 Schotter

760: Gertrude Stein and Thomas Hardy Help You Write a Sentence

E6T2A 0455 T 6:30-8:20 KP 334 Weir

A less eccentric title for this course might be: "Grammar for Dummies." It will start from the assumption that none of my students know what a sentence is and how it works, and its hopeful goal is to destroy the aspiring fiction writer's ludicrous notion that a novel will sell itself as long as it has a really great story, language be damned. Gertrude Stein will teach us that words have plasticity – form, shape, size, heft, texture – as well as meaning, and Thomas Hardy will drive us batty with gothically-attuned sentences that are haunted by Greek myth, Shakespeare, and the Hebrew Bible. Along the way, we will fall in love with the eight parts of speech, and with the differences between and among the various word hoards that English crunches together in its fleshy maw – Anglo-Saxon, Latinate, Greek, French, whatever-the-hell; we will rehearse a brief history of the English language in 90 rushed minutes; we will attempt to resuscitate the dead and useless art of diagramming sentences; we will talk about the music and percussivity of a sentence, the order of its words, the ordering and varying lengths of sentences in paragraphs, the shift in diction from highbrow to low and back again; we will befriend words, and we will come to despise them. This is not a workshop. There will be no "workshopped" fiction assignments. There will instead be weekly exercises organized around a particular issue of diction, music, syntax, grammar, meaning, etc., and students will print out weekly "readings" from the class's online google group. Texts will include Stein's Selected Writings, edited by Carl Van Vechten; three of Hardy's novels, probably Tess of the D'Urbervilles, The Mayor of Casterbridge, and Jude the Obscure; and a large and intimidating grammar textbook, its name to be announced. Since we're reading Hardy, we'll talk about the architecture of his narratives – the secret subtext of the course is to figure out what a novel is. The culminating assignment will be a devious and ingenious exam in which students will be expected on the spur of the moment to do an exhaustive and perceptive explication of a passage of English prose, taking into account every aspect – rhetorical, musical, linguistic – of its construction.

781: Visions & Revisions: Narrative, Metafiction, & the Function of Originality

E6T2A 0620 T 6:30-8:20 HH 08 Faherty

In his 1987 review of J. M. Coetzee's Foe, Denis Donoghue declared that Coetzee "has written a superb novel by reconsidering the events of Robinson Crusoe and presenting them from a new point of view." Donoghue continues by suggesting that Coetzee may "have been impressed by Jean Rhys's conversion of Jane Eyre into Wide Sargasso Sea or by other experiments in displacing an official perspective." The aim

examining such a metafictional tradition we will explore how writers remodel previous narratives in order to re-imagine their arguments and presumptions. In so doing, we will consider how later visions unpack the suggestive fissures of earlier models. Arguably, later writers shift narratological perspectives or contextual settings in order to hear the silences embedded in previous productions, perhaps as part of a sustained effort to bring submerged issues like gender, race, and colonization to the forefront of consideration. We will begin with Defoe's eponymous hero, and then look at two revisions of Crusoe, Unca Eliza Winkfield's *The Female American* and J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*. We will then consider visions and revisions in such pairings as Tobias Smollet's *Roderick Random* & Royall Tyler's *The Algerine Captive*, Mark Twain's *Huck Finn* and John Clinch's recent novel *Finn* which retells Twain's narrative from the perspective of Pap. We will end by both reading Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*, as well as looking at the vivid differences embodied in cinematic versions of those texts. We will also read selections of critical material, including some recent work on narrative theory.

Note: MFA students who take the course will be allowed to write a revision of a short narrative piece and a reflective craft essay about their re-envisioning in place of a final research paper.

781: Special Seminars

E6R2A	0465	Th	6:30-8:20	KY 283	Allen
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We will examine the notion of experimentation in fiction over the last one hundred years or so. Formal innovation happens when novelists and short story writers develop new fictional techniques in an attempt to capture reality. Authors include Marcel Proust, Mavis Gallant, Micheline Aharonian Marcom, Roberto Bolano, and D.H. Lawrence.

791: Thesis Course

Z	0450	***TO BE ANNOUNCED***		KP 334	Weir
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792: Thesis Course

Z	0451	***TO BE ANNOUNCED***		KP 334	Weir
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795: Independent Study

E6M2A	0482	M	6:30-8:20	KP 708	Cooley
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This course is the first semester of the MFA thesis sequence, open only to second year students in the MFA program. Designed to give each student a broader community of readers for his/her thesis, this class will focus on the writing, arrangement and construction of your MFA thesis. This course is multi-genre; we will consider poetry, fiction (short stories/novels), non-fiction/memoir projects, plays and translations.

Each week, we will workshop two writers. We will discuss their work in detail, with attention to a range of issues, from poetic strategies to fictional techniques to voice and how it functions to organize a lyric or a narrative. We will discuss the order and sequencing of thesis projects, considering how you organize a poetry manuscript for example, or how you might link up stories in a collection. We will also talk about the architecture of the thesis and consider tables of contents, epigraphs, dedications, and notes. In addition to class workshops, we will work collaboratively and across genres outside of class.

Readings will be drawn from the MFA Reading List. Other course requirements will include a Reading

This course is only open to second year MFA students. Please contact Nicole Cooley, MFA Director, with questions.

Z 0449 ***TO BE ANNOUNCED*** KP 334 Weir